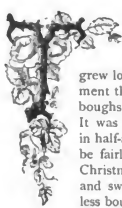
TOINETTE AND THE ELVES.

(A Christmas Story.)

By Susan Coolidge.



THE winter sun was nearing the horizon's edge. Each moment the tree-shadows grew longer in the forest; each moment the crimson light on the upper boughs became more red and bright. It was Christmas Eve, or would be in half-an-hour, when the sun should be fairly set; but it did not feel like Christmas, for the afternoon was mild and sweet, and the wind in the leafless boughs sang, as it moved about, as though to imitate the vanished birds. Soft trills and whistles, odd little shakes and twitters;—it was astonishing what pretty noises the wind made, for it was in good humor, as winds should be on the Blessed Night; all its storm-tones and bass-notes were for the moment laid aside, and gently, as though hushing a baby to sleep, it cooed and rustled and brushed to and fro in the leafless woods.

Toinette stood, pitcher in hand, beside the well. "Wishing Well" the people called it, for they believed that if any one standing there, bowed to the East, repeated a certain rhyme and wished a wish, the wish would certainly come true. Unluckily, nobody knew exactly what the rhyme should be. Toinette did not; she was wishing that she did, as she stood with her eyes fixed on the bubbling water. How nice it would be! she thought. What beautiful things should be hers, if it were only to wish and to have! She would be beautiful, rich, good—oh, so good! The children should love her dearly, and never be disagreeable. Mother should not work so hard—they should all go back to France—which mother said was *si belle*. Oh, dear, how nice it would be! Meantime, the sun sank lower, and mother at home was waiting for the water, but Toinette forgot that.

Suddenly she started. A low sound of crying met her ear, and something like a tiny moan. It seemed close by, but she saw nothing.

Hastily she filled her pitcher, and turned to go. But again the sound came, an unmistakable sob, right under her feet. Toinette stopped short.

"What *is* the matter?" she called out bravely. "Is anybody there; and if there is, why don't I see you?"

A third sob—and all at once, down on the ground beside her, a tiny figure became visible, so small that Toinette had to kneel and stoop her head to see it plainly. The figure was that of an odd little man. He wore a garb of green, bright and glancing as the scales of a beetle. In his mite of a hand was a cap, out of which stuck a long-pointed feather. Two specks of tears stood on his cheeks, and he fixed on Toinette a glance so sharp and so sad, that it made her feel sorry and frightened and confused all at once.

"Why, how funny this is!" she said, speaking to herself out loud.

"Not at all," replied the little man, in a voice as dry and crisp as the chirr of a grasshopper. "Anything but funny. I wish you would n't use such words. It hurts my feelings, Toinette."

"Do you know my name, then?" cried Toinette, astonished. "That 's strange! But what is the matter? Why are you crying so, little man?"

"I 'm not a little man. I 'm an elf," responded the dry voice; "and I think you 'd cry if you had an engagement out to tea, and found yourself spiked on a great bayonet, so that you could n't move an inch. Look!" He turned a little as he spoke, and Toinette saw a long rose-thorn sticking through the back of the green robe. The little man could by no means reach the thorn, and it held him fast prisoner to the place.

"Is that all? I'll take it out for you," she said.

"Be careful—oh, be careful!" entreated the little man. "This is my new dress, you know—my Christmas suit, and it 's got to last a year. If there is a hole in it, Peascod will tickle me, and Bean Blossom tease till I shall wish myself dead." He stamped with vexation at the thought.

"Now, you must n't do that," said Toinette, in a motherly tone, "else you 'll tear it yourself, you know." She broke off the thorn as she spoke, and gently drew it out. The elf anxiously examined the stuff. A tiny puncture only was visible, and his face brightened.

"You 're a good child," he said. "I 'll do as much for you some day, perhaps."

"I would have come before if I had seen you," remarked Toinette, timidly. "But I did n't see you a bit."

"No, because I had my cap on," replied the elf. He placed it on his head as he spoke, and,

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hey, presto! nobody was there, only a voice which laughed and said: "Well—don't stare so. Lay your finger on me now."

"Oh!" said Toinette, with a gasp. "How wonderful! What fun it must be to do that! The children would n't see me. I should steal in and surprise them; they would go on talking, and never guess that I was there! I should so like it! Do elves ever lend their caps to anybody? I wish you 'd lend me yours. It must be so nice to be invisible!"

"Ho!" cried the elf, appearing suddenly again. "Lend my cap, indeed! Why, it would n't stay on the very tip of your ear, it 's so small. As for nice, that depends. Sometimes it is, and sometimes it is n't. No, the only way for mortal people to be invisible is to gather the fern-seed and put it in their shoes."

"Gather it? Where? I never saw any seed to the ferns," said Toinette, staring about her.

"Of course not—we elves take care of that," replied the little man. "Nobody finds the fern-seed but ourselves. I 'll tell you what, though. You were such a nice child to take out the thorn so cleverly, that I 'll *give* you a little of the seed. Then you can try the fun of being invisible to your heart's content."

"Will you really? How delightful! May I have it now?"

"Bless me! do you think I carry my pocket stuffed with it?" said the elf. "Not at all. Go home, say not a word to anybody, but leave your bedroom window open to-night, and you 'll see what you 'll see."

He laid his finger on his nose as he spoke, gave a jump like a grasshopper, clapping on his cap as he went, and vanished. Toinette lingered a moment, in hopes that he might come back, then took her pitcher and hurried home. The woods were very dusky by this time; but, full of her strange adventure, she did not remember to feel afraid.

"How long you have been!" said her mother. "It 's late for a little maid like you to be up. You must make better speed another time, my child."

Toinette pouted, as she was apt to do when reproved. The children clamored to know what had kept her, and she spoke pettishly and crossly; so that they too became cross, and presently went away into the outer kitchen to play by themselves. The children were apt to creep away when Toinette came. It made her angry and unhappy at times that they should do so, but she did not realize that it was in great part her own fault, and so did not set herself to mend it.

"Tell me a 'tory," said baby Jeanneton, creeping to her knee a little later. But Toinette's head was full of the elf; she had no time to spare for Jeanneton.

"Oh, not to-night!" she replied. "Ask mother to tell you one."

"Mother 's busy," said Jeanneton, wistfully.

Toinette took no notice, and the little one crept away disconsolately.

Bed-time at last. Toinette set the casement open, and lay a long time waiting and watching; then she fell asleep. She waked with a sneeze and jump, and sat up in bed. Behold, on the coverlet stood her elfin friend, with a long train of other elves beside him, all clad in the beetle-wing green, and wearing little pointed caps! More were coming in at the window; outside a few were drifting about in the moon-rays, which lit their sparkling robes till they glittered like so many fire-flies. The odd thing was, that though the caps were on, Toinette could see the elves distinctly, and this surprised her so much, that again she thought out loud, and said:

"How funny!"

"You mean about the caps," replied her special elf, who seemed to have the power of reading thoughts. "Yes, you can see us to-night, caps and all. Spells lose their value on Christmas Eve always. Peascod, where is the box? Do you still wish to try the experiment of being invisible, Toinette?"

"Oh, yes—indeed I do!"

"Very well—so let it be!"

As he spoke he beckoned, and two elves, puffing and panting like men with a heavy load, dragged forward a droll little box about the size of a pumpkin-seed. One of them lifted the cover.

"Pay the porter, please ma'am," he said, giving Toinette's ear a mischievous tweak with his sharp fingers.

"Hands off, you bad Peascod!" cried Toinette's elf. "This is my girl. She sha' n't be pinched." He dealt Peascod a blow with his tiny hand as he spoke, and looked so brave and warlike, that he seemed at least an inch taller than he had before. Toinette admired him very much; and Peascod slunk away with an abashed giggle, muttering that Thistle need n't be so ready with his fist.

Thistle—for thus, it seemed, Toinette's friend was named—dipped his fingers in the box, which was full of fine brown seeds, and shook a handful into each of Toinette's shoes, as they stood, toes together, by the bedside.

"Now you have your wish," he said, "and can go about and do what you like, no one seeing. The charm will end at sunset. Make the most of it while you can; but if you want to end it sooner, shake the seeds from the shoes, and then you are just as usual."

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"Oh, I sha' n't want to," protested Toinette; "I 'm sure I sha' n't."

"Good-bye," said Thistle, with a mocking little laugh.

"Good-bye, and thank you ever so much," replied Toinette.

"Good-bye, good-bye," replied the other elves, in shrill chorus. They clustered together, as if in consultation; then straight out of the window they flew like a swarm of gauzy-winged bees, and melted into the moonlight. Toinette jumped up and ran to watch them; but the little men were gone —not a trace of them was to be seen; so she shut the window, went back to bed, and presently, in the midst of her amazed and excited thoughts, fell asleep.

She waked in the morning with a queer, doubtful feeling. Had she dreamed, or had it really happened? She put on her best petticoat, and laced her blue bodice; for she thought the mother would perhaps take them across the wood to the little chapel for the Christmas service. Her long hair smoothed and tied, her shoes trimly fastened, downstairs she ran. The mother was stirring porridge over the fire. Toinette went close to her, but she did not move or turn her head.

"How late the children are!" she said at last, lifting the boiling pot on the hob. Then she went to the stair-foot, and called, "Marc, Jeanneton, Pierre, Marie! Breakfast is ready, my children. Toinette—but where, then, is Toinette? She is used to be down long before this."

THE ELVES VISIT TOINETTE.

"Toinette is n't upstairs," said Marie, from above. "Her door is wide open, and she is n't there."

"That is strange!" said the mother. "I have

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been here an hour, and she has not passed this way since." She went to the outer door and called, "Toinette! Toinette!"—passing close to Toinette as she did so, and looking straight at her with unseeing eyes. Toinette, half-frightened, half-pleased, giggled low to herself. She really was invisible then! How strange it seemed, and what fun it was going to be!

The children sat down to breakfast, little Jeanneton, as the youngest, saying grace. The mother distributed the hot porridge, and gave each a spoon, but she looked anxious.

"Where can Toinette have gone?" she said to herself.

Toinette was conscience-pricked. She was half inclined to dispel the charm on the spot. But just then she caught a whisper from Pierre to Marc, which so surprised her as to put the idea out of her head.

"Perhaps a wolf has eaten her up—a great big wolf, like the 'Capuchon Rouge,' you know." This was what Pierre said; and Marc answered, unfeelingly:

"If he has, I shall ask mother to let me have her room for my own!"

Poor Toinette! her cheeks burnt and her eyes filled with tears at this. Did n't the boys love her a bit, then? Next she grew angry, and longed to box Marc's ears, only she recollected in time that she was invisible. What a bad boy he was! she thought.

The smoking porridge reminded her that she was hungry; so brushing away the tears, she slipped a spoon off the table, and whenever she found the chance, dipped it into the bowl for a mouthful. The porridge disappeared rapidly.

"I want some more," said Jeanneton.

"Bless me, how fast you have eaten!" said the mother, turning to the bowl.

This made Toinette laugh, which shook her spoon, and a drop of the hot mixture fell right on the tip of Marie's nose, as she sat with up-turned face waiting her turn for a second helping. Marie gave a little scream.

"What is it?" said the mother.

"Hot water! Right in my face!" spluttered Marie.

"Water!" cried Marc. "It 's porridge."

"You spattered with your spoon. Eat more carefully, my child," said the mother; and Toinette laughed again as she heard her. After all, there was some fun in being invisible!

The morning went by. Constantly the mother went to the door, and, shading her eyes with her hand, looked out, in hopes of seeing a little figure come down the wood-path, for she thought, perhaps, the child went to the spring after water, and fell asleep there. The children played happily, meanwhile. They were used to doing without Toinette, and did not seem to miss her, except that now and then baby Jeanneton said: "Poor Toinette gone—not here—all gone!"

"Well, what if she has?" said Marc at last, looking up from the wooden cup he was carving for Marie's doll. "We can play all the better."

Marc was a bold, outspoken boy, who always told his whole mind about things.

"If she were here," he went on, "she 'd only scold and interfere. Toinette almost always scolds. I like to have her go away. It makes it pleasanter."

"It *is* rather pleasanter," admitted Marie, "only I 'd like her to be having a nice time somewhere else."

"Bother about Toinette!" cried Pierre. "Let 's play 'My godmother has cabbage to sell.'"

I don 't think Toinette had ever felt so unhappy in her life, as when she stood by unseen, and heard the children say these words. She had never meant to be unkind to them, but she was quick-tempered, dreamy, wrapped up in herself. She did not like being interrupted by them, it put her out, and then she spoke sharply and was cross. She had taken it for granted that the others must love her, by a sort of right, and the knowledge that they did not grieved her very much. Creeping away, she hid herself in the woods. It was a sparkling day, but the sun did not look so bright as usual. Cuddled down under a rose-bush, Toinette sat, sobbing as if her heart would break at the recollection of the speeches she had overheard.

By and by a little voice within her woke up and began to make itself audible. All of us know this little voice. We call it conscience.

"Jeanneton missed me," she thought. "And, oh dear! I pushed her away only last night and would n't tell her a story. And Marie hoped I was having a pleasant time somewhere. I wish I had n't slapped Marie last Friday. And I wish I had n't thrown Marc's ball into the fire that day I was angry with him. How unkind he was to say that—but I was n't always kind to him. And once I said that I wished a bear would eat Pierre up. That was because he broke my cup. Oh dear, oh dear! What a bad girl I 've been to them all!"

"But you could be better and kinder if you tried, could n't you?" said the inward voice. "I think you could." And Toinette clasped her hands tight and said out loud: "I could. Yes—and I will."

The first thing to be done was to get rid of the fern-seed, which she now regarded as a hateful thing. She untied her shoes and shook it out in the grass. It dropped and seemed to melt into the

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air, for it instantly vanished. A mischievous laugh sounded close behind, and a beetle-green coat-tail was visible, whisking under a tuft of rushes. But Toinette had had enough of the elves, and tying her shoes, took the road toward home, running with all her might.

"Where have you been all day, Toinette?" cried the children, as, breathless and panting, she flew in at the gate. But Toinette could not speak. She made slowly for her mother, who stood in the door-way, flung herself into her arms, and burst into a passion of tears.

"Ma chérie, what is it, whence hast thou come?" asked the good mother, alarmed. She lifted Toinette into her arms as she spoke, and hastened indoors. The other children followed, whispering and peeping, but the mother sent them away, and, sitting down by the fire with Toinette in her lap, she rocked and hushed and comforted, as though Toinette had been again a little baby. Gradually the sobs ceased. For awhile Toinette lay quiet, with her head on her mother's breast. Then she wiped her wet eyes, put her arms around her mother's neck, and told her all from the very beginning, keeping not a single thing back. The dame listened with alarm.

"Saints protect us," she muttered. Then feeling Toinette's hands and head, "Thou hast a fever," she said. "I will make thee a *tisane*, my darling, and thou must at once go to bed." Toinette vainly protested; to bed she went, and perhaps it was the wisest thing, for the warm drink threw her into a long, sound sleep, and when she woke she was herself again, bright and well, hungry for dinner, and ready to do her usual tasks.

Herself,—but not quite the same Toinette that she had been before. Nobody changes from bad to better in a minute. It takes time for that, time and effort and a long struggle with evil habits and tempers. But there is sometimes a certain minute or day in which people *begin* to change, and thus it was with Toinette. The fairy lesson was not lost upon her. She began to fight with herself, to watch her faults and try to conquer them. It was hard work; often she felt discouraged, but she kept on. Week after week and month after month, she grew less selfish, kinder, more obliging than she used to be. When she failed, and her old fractious temper got the better of her, she was sorry, and begged every one's pardon so humbly, that they could not but forgive. The mother began to think that the elves really had bewitched her child. As for the children, they learned to love Toinette as never before, and came to her with all their pains and pleasures, as children should to a kind older sister. Each fresh proof of this, each kiss from Jeanneton, each confidence from Marc, was a comfort to Toinette, for she never forgot Christmas-day, and felt that no trouble was too much to wipe out that unhappy recollection. "I *think* they like me better than they did then," she would say, but then the thought came, "Perhaps if I were invisible again, if they did not know I was there, I might hear something to make me feel as badly as I did that morning." These sad thoughts were part of the bitter fruit of the fairy fern-seed.

So with doubts and fears the year went by, and again it was Christmas Eve. Toinette had been asleep some hours, when she was roused by a sharp tapping at the window pane. Startled and only half-awake, she sat up in bed, and saw by the moonlight, a tiny figure outside, which she recognized. It was Thistle, drumming with his knuckles on the glass.

"Let me in," cried the dry little voice. So Toinette opened the casement, and Thistle flew in and perched, as before, on the coverlet.

"Merry Christmas, my girl," he said, "and a Happy New Year when it comes! I've brought you a present;" and, dipping into a pouch tied round his waist, he pulled out a handful of something brown. Toinette knew what it was in a moment.

"Oh, no!" she cried, shrinking back. "Don't give me any fern-seeds. They frighten me. I don't like them."

"Now, don't be silly," said Thistle, his voice sounding kind this time, and earnest. "It was n't pleasant being invisible last year, but perhaps this year it will be. Take my advice and try it. You 'll not be sorry."

"Sha' n't I?" said Toinette, brightening. "Very well then, I will." She leaned out of bed, and watched Thistle strew the fine, dust-like grains in each shoe.

"I 'll drop in to-morrow night, and just see how you like it," he said. Then, with a nod, he was gone.

The old fear came back when she woke in the morning, and she tied on her shoes with a tremble at her heart. Down-stairs she stole. The first thing she saw was a wooden ship standing on her plate. Marc had made the ship, but Toinette had no idea that it was for her.

The little ones sat round the table with their eyes on the door, watching till Toinette should come in, and be surprised.

"I wish she 'd hurry," said Pierre, drumming on his bowl with a spoon.

"We all want Toinette, don't we?" said the mother, smiling as she poured the hot porridge.

"It will be fun to see her stare," declared Marc. "Toinette is jolly when she stares. Her eyes look big, and her cheeks grow pink. Andre Brugen

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thinks his sister Aline is prettiest, but I don't. Our Toinette is ever so pretty."

"She is ever so nice, too," said Pierre. "She 's as good to play with as—as—a boy!" he finished, triumphantly.

"Oh, I wish my Toinette *would* come!" said Jeanneton.

Toinette waited no longer, but sped upstairs with glad tears in her eyes. Two minutes, and

THE ELVES' SUPPER.

down she came again, visible this time. Her heart was light as a feather.

"Merry Christmas!" clamored the children. The ship was presented, Toinette was duly surprised, and so the happy day began.

That night Toinette left the window open, and lay down in her clothes; for she felt, as Thistle had been so kind, she ought to receive him politely. He came at midnight, and with him all the other little men in green.

"Well, how was it?" asked Thistle.

"Oh, I liked it this time," declared Toinette, with shining eyes. "And I thank you so much!"

"I 'm glad you did," said the elf. "And I 'm glad you are thankful, for we want you to do something for us."

"What can it be?" inquired Toinette, wondering.

"You must know," went on Thistle, "that there is no dainty in the world which we elves enjoy like a bowl of fern-seed broth. But it has to be cooked over a real fire, and we dare not go near fire, you know, lest our wings scorch. So we seldom get any fern-seed broth. Now, Toinette—will you make us some?"

"Indeed I will," cried Toinette, "only you must tell me how."

"It is very simple," said Peascod; "only seed and honey dew, stirred from left to right with a sprig of fennel. Here 's the seed and the fennel, and here 's the dew. Be sure and stir from the left; if you don't, it curdles, and the flavor will be spoiled."

Down into the kitchen they went, and Toinette, moving very softly, quickened the fire, set on the smallest bowl she could find, and spread the doll's table with the wooden saucers which Marc had made for Jeanneton to play with. Then she mixed and stirred as the elves bade, and when the soup was done, served it to them smoking hot. How they feasted! No bumble-bee, dipping into a flower-cup, ever sipped and twinkled more rapturously than they.

When the last drop was eaten, they made ready to go. Each, in turn, kissed Toinette's hand, and said a little word of farewell. Thistle brushed his feathered cap over the door-post as he passed.

"Be lucky, house," he said, "for you have received and entertained the luck-bringers. And be lucky, Toinette. Good temper *is* good luck, and sweet words and kind looks and peace in the heart are the fairest of fortunes. See that you never lose them again, my girl." With this, he, too, kissed Toinette's hand, waved his feathered cap and—whirr! they all were gone, while Toinette, covering the fire with ashes, and putting aside the little cups, stole up to her bed a happy child.

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The sound roused the Nancys. They moved—started—sat up.

"Oh, oh! what is it? Who are you? Father! It 's my father, Nancy!"

"And mine, too!" And the Nancys, lifted each into the arms of her own special parent, kissed and clung and cried.

"Oh, it 's been dreadful," sobbed Nancy Sarkie, "but Nancy Spence was so brave—a great deal braver than me, father. She wrapped me up and dried my clothes, and was *so* kind."

"We 're going to be friends now, father," broke in Nancy Spence. "I never knew what a nice girl Nancy Sarkie was before. We may be friends, may n't we? You don't mind, do you, father?" And she and Nancy Sarkie took hold of each other's hands.

The two farmers regarded each other by the light of the moon. Farmer Sarkie cleared his throat once or twice. Then:

"Neighbor," he said, "we 've been at loggerheads now these twelve years or more. I wont say who was right in the matter, or who was wrong, but only this: If you 're so minded, we 'll strike hands here and end the matter. These girls of ours set us an example."

"You 're in the right of it, neighbor," replied Farmer Spence. "There 's my hand, and it sha' n't be my fault if we fall out again."

The Nancys hugged each other.

So ended the famous Spence and Sarkie quarrel, and, in spite of fright and wetting, four light hearts sailed back across the dark sea that night to Lanark village.

HOW TO MAKE AND STOCK AN AQUARIUM.

By ADELAIDE F. SAMUELS.

ALMOST all of you—I am addressing the boys and girls who read ST. NICHOLAS—know what an aquarium is, and many of you have, no doubt, wished to own one; but the tanks made of French plate-glass and iron, for sale in the shops, are so expensive, that few can afford to buy them; for those who cannot, I will tell how we—that is my nephew Frank and myself—made ours for less than two dollars; and it answers every purpose.

Of course you must wait until spring before you can stock an aquarium, but it should be made in the winter; and it is also well to learn now what to do when spring comes.

First, we took a piece of planed pine board, two feet two inches long, and one foot two inches wide, for the bottom of the tank; this was just about an inch thick. Then four pieces of hard wood or pine, one foot in length each, and about an inch square. These corner posts now had to be grooved so as to admit the glass at right angles. The posts were then fitted into a shallow place at the angles formed by a groove which we had made in the bottom board, and a screw driven into each through from the under side. The frame was now ready for the glass, the posts being set so as to leave about an inch of the bottom board projecting all around.

We then bought our glass, the side pieces measuring two feet long and a foot wide, the end pieces a foot square. We had the grooves in the corner sticks wide enough for the glass to slip in easily; it might have broken while we were trying to get it in, had we not taken that precaution. Then we nailed a slat of wood, an inch wide, all around the board on the outside of the glass. For the top, we made four grooved sticks to bind the glass, and secured them to the corner pieces; but as the corner pieces and glass sides were of the same height, we were careful to have the grooved part of the top pieces deeper than where they were secured at the corners.

Carpenters use a kind of cement that they call "rubber cement." For a few cents, we bought enough to cover the bottom and the corners of our tank neatly. Then all around the bottom, on the wood outside the glass, we arranged shells in putty; then, having painted black the wood-work yet visible, our tank was done. We knew better than to use white-lead in the putty, or paint of any kind on the inside.

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By the time we had finished the tank, it was too late to think of stocking it; so we put it away till spring should come; then we were delighted to find that the cement had dried as hard as marble, though had we examined it months before we should have found it just as hard. This cement requires only a short time for drying.

We washed the tank out nicely, and made a place for it on a window-seat, where we could open the window back of it, to keep the water cool; for the cooler the water in an aquarium is kept, the better. In hot weather, it is sometimes necessary to place ice around the tank, or put a few pieces in the water.

Stocking an Aquarium.

Stocking an aquarium is a great deal pleasanter than making the tank. Having procured a long-handled net, a tin pail, a long, stout fishing-line, with several large hooks firmly secured at one end, and something that will hold water enough to fill your tank, you set out for specimens. Ours is a salt-water aquarium; and as I am drawing only from our personal experience, I will say nothing of any other kind.

First seek some place where you know the water is very deep, or deep enough for a large vessel to sail in; then take out your line, and throw it overboard; let the hooks go as far down as they will; never mind baiting them; what you want to catch will come up without it.

Your hooks have caught in something: a hard pull, and up comes a sponge. Sponges soon die in aquariums, and are injurious to the water; so, although your prize is handsome and curious, you will throw it overboard.

What have you caught this time? Nothing but a bunch of mussels, all matted together; yes, and half an old clam-shell attached to them; on the shell is something as large as a hen's egg, that looks like a piece of shrunken leather, only it is soft, like jelly. It does not look like a flower now, but it is one. Wait till you see it in your aquarium, after it has had a little time to recover from its alarm! It is an *animated* flower, called the sea-anemone. You will take great pleasure in feeding it, as it will eat meat as fast as you will, in comparison to its size. Put it, just as it is, into your pail, then throw out your line again; for you must have some more of them, of different colors.

Up come two on one shell! That is capital! Now you have a dark-red one, a yellow one, and a delicate pink-and-white one. Those will be all the anemones you will want.

There is something attached to the little stone that came up with the last anemone. It looks like a diminutive bush, with very delicate creamy pink branches, and on the end of each is a dark pink, jelly-like knob,—that is another live animal; and as it is a small one of its kind, you can put it, stone and all, into the pail. Never mind if you have knocked off two or three of its heads; they will grow again.

Now we will go to yonder creek, and see what we can get with our net. Scoop it along the bank, and let some mud come, too. Now, what is in it? Some shrimp, and some little fishes. You will want a dozen shrimp, at least; and of the fishes—small minnows, and sticklebacks—choose three or four of each. Now, from the salt grass at your feet, pick a dozen or more snails: they are not very handsome, or interesting, but are indispensable in an aquarium, as they keep the glass clean, and eat all the decaying vegetable matter.

Now a few plants, to supply oxygen to the water, will be all that is necessary. Choose two or three stones as large as hens' eggs, with a generous crop of *green* sea-weed upon them. The brown and red sea-weeds usually do more harm than good; but that little stone of brown rock-weed you can take, as I see a pink bunch upon it, which I will tell you all about, when you get it in your aquarium.

There is a small stone full of barnacles; take that, too; for the barnacles are very interesting—to the sticklebacks. Now you can start for home with your collection.

Your tank is all ready, in the north window of the sitting-room, where the sun never comes. Arrange your plants in it carefully, without detaching them from the stones they are on; then place the anemones in front, where they will have room to expand, and where they can be seen easily; then put in the fishes, shrimps, snails, etc., and fill up the tank with the clear, pure salt water you brought.

Now look at the animated bush, attached to the stone! Every one of the jelly-like knobs, at the extremity of every branchlet, has expanded, and you have no less than twenty beautiful flowers, resembling the cyclamen, with pearly white petals, and centers deeper-colored than peach-blossoms; only the petals in this case are called *tentacles*, and are thrown out to catch whatever comes in their way in the shape of food.

The little pink bunch attached to the sea-weed has opened, also, and you see what resembles a dozen, or more, star-like flowers, on stems a quarter of an inch long: every one of them is a separate animal, as that foolish shrimp just proved to you; for, as he was swimming lazily by, he allowed his fan-like tail to come within their reach, and these zoophytes immediately closed around it; but the shrimp was fortunate enough to get away.

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Wait a minute, till I tell you what that big word means! Zoophytes means "animal plants" (from two Greek words: *zoon*, an animal, and *phuton*, a plant), and is applied to sponges, corals, sea-anemones, and all those numerous beings that were at first supposed to hold a middle position between the animal and vegetable kingdoms, but whose natures have since been ascertained to be strictly animal.

Now look at your anemones! The yellow one has spread out like a great sun-flower, on a stem as large around as a tea-cup, and three inches long. That stem is its body. The flat bottom of the stem has to answer for feet, and it will soon walk out of the shell it is on, if it becomes dissatisfied with its new dwelling-place. One of ours became discontented, and was two days walking over the glass. At last he attached himself to the cemented bottom of the tank, where he now appears to be perfectly contented. They move by suction, after the manner of snails.

Every one of their numerous tentacles has power to sting and paralyze whatever small prey comes within its reach, so they are able to catch and devour fish nearly as large as themselves. The little fishes in our aquarium seem to know all about them, and it is seldom one will approach them; but yesterday, as I was trying to remove with a small stick a piece of meat that I had dropped on an anemone, a minim, that had been watching me, offered to assist me, and approached the anemone near enough to touch one of its tentacles; then away it darted, shaking its head.

I had the curiosity to insert my finger in among the tentacles, and immediately experienced a sensation in it like a slight galvanic shock, and from my finger to my wrist was quite numb for several hours afterward.

You did not know how barnacles worked before, did you? Each one of them is now throwing out a full dozen of delicately constructed feelers, that look like diminutive ostrich plumes; on these they catch their food, which is too small to be seen by the naked eye. It is amusing to watch them as they work. One would imagine they had clocks inside their shells to time themselves by, so regular are their movements.

Here is a stickleback admiring them, too. It is poised motionless in the water above them, with the three sharp horns upon its back sticking up threateningly; now he darts down, and, taking all of one barnacle's feelers in his mouth, he bites them off, shaking his head savagely because they do not come easily.

What is the shrimp about to do that is climbing up the stone, running the risk of getting his delicate feet caught in the barnacle-shells as they close? He pauses before the barnacle the stickleback has just left, and, thrusting his two-fingered hand into the partly opened shell, pulls off a piece of the poor body, and conveys it to his mouth, watching you all the while with his great goggle eyes, and looking for all the world like "Jacky Horner," who "put in his thumb and pulled out a plum." You may be sure he will not leave that shell till it is as clean inside as it is out.

A pair of our sticklebacks have just built a nest of sea-weed in one corner of our aquarium, and are guarding it all the time. Woe to the minnow who should be so unfortunate as to approach it! We are watching every day for the little fish to make their appearance. Papa Stickleback attends to the nest now, but soon the old mother-fish will have all she can do to keep her children at home and out of danger; for, as there are two doors to her nest, they will dart out of one door nearly as fast as she can put them in at the other. Her way of carrying them cannot be agreeable to the little ones, for she takes them in her mouth, and often swallows them; but when she re-deposits them in the nest, they are well, and lively.

You will want to feed your anemones every day, with small pieces of dried meat. You will be astonished to see how many different shapes they will take; for, besides looking like different flowers, they will at times contract their bodies and resemble vases full of flowers; then they will droop their tentacles, and resemble the weeping willow-tree; then they will turn all their tentacles inside their bodies, and look like long thimbles; and when you touch them with a stick, down they will drop as flat as fried eggs.

Your greatest trouble will be to keep the water pure, unless you should be so fortunate as to just balance the vegetable and animal life; in that case, everything will thrive.

It is better to have a few good healthy animals than many; and if one dies, it should be removed at once.

The green dulce, or sea-cabbage, is the best for the vegetable element of the aquarium; and it should be washed before being placed within. A good way to send air into the tank is to dip up the water carefully, and let it fall in such a manner as to make bubbles.

Those who live near the salt water can easily renew the water in their aquariums, if it becomes impure; but those who live at a distance from the coast can restore the water to its original purity by filtering it through a sponge. The trouble will be nothing in comparison to the joy you will experience on beholding the gratitude expressed by the animated beings in your aquarium.

As there has been so much done lately in the

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business of making aquariums, it is quite possible to purchase cheap iron ones; and better still, we often see second-hand ones of all sizes for sale very cheap. In the city, the bird-dealers and "Old Curiosity" men have them, and in nearly all large towns there are naturalists and taxidermists who either have them, or will kindly give all information about them. So if our home-made aquarium is not just what our readers care to have, they can with very little cost secure a better. We have seen aquaria made very strongly and durably of stone and iron. A flat piece of slate or freestone, or marble, is easily grooved, and then a blacksmith can easily make iron standards or corner posts with grooves; these can be fitted into holes at the corners, and secured firmly by screws from beneath. We think that it is better to have the tank of stone or iron, if practicable, as the wood almost always swells to such an extent that it soon becomes troublesome.

A very pleasant aquarium, and a very handsome one, is soon made by taking one of the large cake-bells of the confectioner, and setting it on a wooden stand to support it. You can easily do it by boring a hole in a stout piece of pine t admit the handle. You have then a beautiful tank, and one that will not leak. This is also very easily cleaned, which is an important point.

THE LITTLE MERMAID.

By Carrie W. Thompson.

A NICE little mermaid lived under the sea,
And always a-combing her hair was she.

She did it high up, and she did it low down,
She twisted it in with a sea-shell crown;

She braided and curled it for hours and hours,
And spangled it over with coral flowers.

But once she grew tired of combing her hair,
And fell to wondering what was where.

She climbed on a rock to talk with the gales,
And made great eyes at the sharks and whales.

Some white-winged gulls flew over her head;
"Now where can those things live?" she said.

She wondered and wondered, but could n't guess where,
For she thought the whole world was water and air.

"And so many great ships sail over the sea;
Where they are going is what puzzles me!

"They will get to the edge of the sea some day,
And tumble off in a terrible way.

"There 'll be nowhere to catch them, I 'm afraid—
So they 'll tumble forever!" said the little mermaid.

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She saw such toads and newts and flies,
She walked with tears and groans and sighs.
Her shining hair and drooping eyes,
The prince was pleased to approve them.

But when this princess nearer came,
She saw no plume like scarlet flame;
She shuddered when he spoke her name.
"Your shoes!" she cried, a-swooning.

The youngest sister, smiling free,
Along the path tripped merrily.
Her eyes were sparkling like the sea,
As it glittered far before them.

And sang she then a roundelay:
"Your posies gather on the way;
An' if you do not, there they lay,
And you 'll wander on without them!"

She frankly smiled into his eyes;
She met his words with fair replies.
"I find this princess fair and wise,"
He said, and fell a-wooing.

Within his castle grand and old,
On fairy blue, in fairy gold,
A dainty maxim there is told,
Above his lady's chamber:
"Who wishes for the moon alone,
To many tumbles she is prone;
Who walks abroad with lowered eyes,
She sees but toads and newts and flies;
Who looks not low, nor yet too high,
May pluck the flowers and see the sky."

THE FESTIVAL OF TAPERS.

By Charles Dudley Warner.

THE other evening at Vespers, attracted by a burst of music from the swinging curtain of the door-way, I entered a little church much frequented by the common people. An unexpected and exceedingly pretty sight rewarded me.

It was All Souls' Day. Here in Italy almost every day is set apart for some festival, or belongs to some saint or another, and I suppose that when leap-year brings round the extra day, there is a saint ready to claim the 29th of February. Whatever the day was to the elders, the evening was devoted to the children. The first thing I noticed was that the quaint old church was lighted up with innumerable wax tapers,—an unusual sight, for the darkness of a Catholic church in the evening is usually relieved only by a candle here and there, and by a blazing pyramid of them on the high altar. The use of gas is held to be a vulgar thing all over Europe, and specially unfit for a church or an aristocratic palace.

Then I saw that each taper belonged to a little boy or girl, and that groups of children were scattered all about the church. There was a group by every side altar and chapel, all the benches were occupied by knots of them, and there were so many circles of them seated on the pavement that I could with difficulty make my way among them. There were hundreds of children in the church, all dressed in their holiday apparel, and all intent upon the illumination, which seemed to be a private affair to each one of them.

And not much effect had their tapers upon the darkness of the vast vaults above them. The tapers were little spiral coils of wax, which the children unrolled as fast as they burned, and when they were tired of holding them, they rested them on the ground and watched the burning. I stood some time by a group of a dozen seated in a corner of the church. They had massed all the tapers in the center and formed a ring about the spectacle, sitting with their legs straight out before them and their toes turned up. The light shone full in their happy faces, and made the group, enveloped otherwise in darkness, like one of Correggio's pictures of children or angels. Correggio was a famous Italian artist of the sixteenth century, who painted

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cherubs like children who were just going to heaven, and children like cherubs who had just come out of it. But, then, he had the Italian children for models, and they get the knack of being lovely very young. An Italian child finds it as easy to be pretty as an American child does to be good.

One could not but be struck with the patience these little people exhibited in their occupation, and the enjoyment they got out of it. There was no noise; all conversed in subdued whispers, and behaved in the most gentle manner to each other, There is nothing that a baby likes more than a lighted candle, and the church has understood this longing in human nature, and found means to gratify it by this festival of tapers.

The groups do not all remain long in place, you may imagine; there is a good deal of shifting about, and I see little stragglers wandering over the church, like fairies lighted by fire-flies. Occasionally they form a little procession and march from one altar to another, their lights twinkling as they go.

But all this time there is music pouring out of

THE CHILDREN WITH THEIR TAPERS.

especially to the smallest, and there were many of them so small that they could only toddle about by the most judicious exercise of their equilibrium. I do not say this by way of reproof to any other kind of children.

These little groups, as I have said, were scattered all about the church; and they made with their tapers little spots of light, which looked in the distance very much like Correggio's picture which is at Dresden,—the Holy Family at night, and the light from the Divine Child blazing in the faces of all the attendants. Some of the children were infants in the nurse's arms, but no one was too small to have a taper, and to run the risk of burning its fingers.

the organ-loft at the end of the church, and flooding all its spaces with its volume. In front of the organ is a choir of boys, led by a round-faced and jolly monk, who rolls about as he sings, and lets the deep bass noise rumble about a long time in his stomach before he pours it out of his mouth. I can see the faces of all of them quite well, for each singer has a candle to light his music-book.

And next to the monk stands THE BOY—the handsomest boy in the whole world probably at this moment. I can see now his great, liquid, dark eyes, and his exquisite face, and the way he tossed back his long, waving hair when he struck into his part. He resembled the portraits of Raphael,

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when that artist was a boy; only I think he looked better than Raphael, and without trying, for he seemed to be a spontaneous sort of boy. And how that boy did sing! He was the soprano of the choir, and he had a voice of heavenly sweetness. When he opened his mouth and tossed back his head, he filled the church with exquisite melody.

He sang like a lark, or like an angel. As we never heard an angel sing, that comparison is not worth much. I have seen pictures of angels singing —there is one by Jan and Hubert Van Eyck in the Gallery at Berlin—and they open their mouths like this boy, but I can't say as much for their singing. The lark, which you very likely never heard either —for larks are as scarce in America as angels—is a bird that springs up from the meadow and begins to sing as he rises in a spiral flight, and the higher he mounts the sweeter he sings, until you think the notes are dropping out of heaven itself, and you hear him when he is gone from sight, and you think you hear him long after all sound has ceased.

And yet this boy sang better than a lark, because he had more notes and a greater compass, and more volume, although he shook out his voice in the same gleesome abundance.

I am sorry that I cannot add that this ravishingly beautiful boy was a good boy. He was probably one of the most mischievous boys that was ever in an organ-loft. All the time that he was singing the Vespers, he was skylarking like an imp. While he was pouring out the most divine melody he would take the opportunity of kicking the shins of the boy next to him, and while he was waiting for his part he would kick out behind at any one who was incautious enough to approach him. There never was such a vicious boy; he kept the whole loft in a ferment. When the monk rumbled his bass in his stomach, the boy cut up monkey-shines that set every other boy into a laugh, or he stirred up a row that set them all at fisticuffs.

And yet this boy was a great favorite. The jolly monk loved him best of all, and bore with his wildest pranks. When he was wanted to sing his part and was skylarking in the rear, the fat monk took him by the ear and brought him forward, and when he gave the boy's ear a twist, the boy opened his lovely mouth and poured forth such a flood of melody as you never heard. And he did n't mind his notes; he seemed to know his notes by heart, and could sing and look off, like a nightingale on a bough. He knew his power, that boy, and he stepped forward to his stand when he pleased, certain that he would be forgiven as soon as he began to sing. And such spirit and life as he threw into the performance, rollicking through the Vespers with a perfect abandon of carriage, as if he could sing himself out of his skin if he liked.

While the little angels down below were pattering about with their wax tapers, keeping the holy fire burning, suddenly the organ stopped, the monk shut his book with a bang, the boys blew out the candles, and I heard them all tumbling down stairs in a gale of noise and laughter. And the Beautiful Boy I saw no more.

HOW DROLL!

By M. E.

FOURTEEN little *thin* bugs, caught out in a shower,
Scrambled quick as lightning into the nearest flower.
"Dew and honey!" said they all. "Dear me! this is sweet!
Looks as though it really might be good enough to eat."
They smelled it, they tasted it,—"Yes, indeed! it's nice!"
Leaflet after leaflet vanished in a trice.

By the time the sun came, to chase away the shower,
There were all the fourteen bugs, but who could find the flower?
Into it the creatures went; now *it* was in *them*—
Fourteen little *fat* bugs, sitting on a stem!

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immortal heritage to be handed down from generation to generation.

The little children who look at her may not all have beautiful faces to give pleasure to others, and no Sir Joshua to make them enduring if they had; they may live in as obscure a corner of the world as the nameless little strawberry girl, and die there unknown; but they may be quite sure that there is not a kindly word of theirs, nor an honest act, nor a true, noble thought which will not go out into the world as her innocence has done, to help to make it better and be like it—immortal.

THE "MISS MUFFETT" SERIES.

(No. VI.)

[For the benefit, this time, of our readers who are learning French.]

Petite Marie Martin,
En mangeant du pain,
D'un corbeau reçoit une visite.
Dit-elle, "Eh bien!
Je vous laiss'rai mon pain.
Au revoir!" Et elle sortit très-vite.

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EYEBRIGHTS.

By L. G. Warner.

"Oh, how came you here,
You sweet, airy things—
Such troops and troops of you?
Had n't you wings?
For here but yesterday
Snow lay cold,—
Who ever heard
Of babies so bold!"

"Wings?—oh, not at all!
But down in our bed,
Under the leaves,
We heard overhead
The quick little feet
Of a robin run;
And a warm, soft ray
From the kind, great sun
Was sent that moment,
Just for our sake;
While a bluebird sang:
'Wake, little dears, wake!'
Then the queer little bugs
That had cuddled up warm
In a moss-bed near,
Through the wind and storm
And some spry little ants,
Of a sudden stirred,
And were off on their travels,
Without one word.
So up through the leaves
All shining with rain,
We sprang back to life,
Right happy again
To see the green grass
And blue, blue skies,
The buds and the birds,
With our own bright eyes.
Some of us came
Ere the moon's pale light
Had faded away,
And are fair and white;
And some slept on
The still night through,
And caught in our faces
The day's warm blue.
Such a bright, glad world,
No matter what weather,
For in sunshine or shade
We 're always together!
On us all alike
The rain must fall;
When the wind waves one
It waves us all.
Such a joy to breathe
The sweet, soft air!
To hear the music
That 's everywhere!
To look far up
At the trees so high,
And watch the branches
Against the sky!
But when the children

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READY FOR EUROPE.

By Susan Coolidge.

A good many of you girls who read St. Nicholas will go to Europe some day or other. Just now, perhaps, you don't think or care much about it; but by and by, when you are older, and hear people who have been there talk of their doings and seeings, the desire to go will strengthen, and you will wish it very much indeed. There are some persons who will tell you that this desire is foolish and wrong; that going to Europe is just now the fashion, and silly folks who like to follow the fashions go for that reason. But I think this a mistake. To travel anywhere, intelligently, has a great deal of education in it, and for an American to go to Europe, where is so much we cannot as yet have in our own country, is education of the very best sort.

I want, therefore, to talk about this journey which some of you are to take, and the way in which to get the greatest good and pleasure out of it. This is not to make any one discontented who cannot go. That would be a pity, indeed. But nobody knows beforehand what their chances are going to be; and as business, or sickness, or unforeseen changes of various kinds may bring the opportunity to any of you when it is least looked for, it will not be lost time to get ready to take advantage of it should it come. Then, if it never comes, you will at least have had the improvement of getting ready, which in itself is a very good thing.

First, then, let us decide what it is that makes it worth while to go at all. To be amused, to buy pretty things, and have what you girls call "a good time," is not enough. Good times and shopping and amusement are to be had in America; it would scarcely pay to cross the Atlantic in search of them, though they are nice things to catch at by the way. A great many do go with no other wish or idea in their minds; but something higher there must be, or the wise would not follow their example.

To begin with, then: there are better chances for study in certain branches than we can have at home. The most famous masters for music and painting live in Europe, and languages can be acquired there more readily and perfectly than with us. To pick up French or German by the ear as a little child does, is indeed learning made easy. It is thus that children on the Continent are taught. It is nothing uncommon to find a girl of eighteen who speaks and thinks equally well in four or five tongues. She has had a French nurse, and a German and an Italian; or has gone to school in the different countries; and as people about her are using the languages continually, her chance for practice is perpetual, and a good accent comes without trouble. Each little Russian boy, when admitted to the Government schools, is required to speak French and German; and Russian parents often carry their families to spend a year or two in France and Germany, so that they may absorb languages, as it were, without knowing that there is any difficulty in the matter.

But apart from actual study,—for some of you will not have time for that,—there is great and constant instruction to be gained by what you see. We read in books about wonderful things, such as cathedrals, temples, Alpine scenery, Raphael's Madonnas; but, however hard we try, we cannot distinctly picture them until we see. One hour spent in a real cathedral teaches more of the true meaning and glory of architecture than weeks spent over books. One glance at a snow-peak sets an image in our brain which never could have been there without that glance. I once heard a lady say that she was sure she knew just how Mont Blanc must look, because it was just twice and a half as high as Mount Washington, and she could easily imagine two and a half Mount Washingtons piled on top of one another, and covered with snow! But when she came to see the actual Mont Blanc, she found that none of her imaginary pilings-up had in the least prepared her for the look of the real thing.

Then, it is not only certain great objects which are made real to us by seeing them, but also everything, however small, which we have learned about or been told of. We read Hume and Gibbon, and that this or that happened in such a year or such a reign, but it is all dim and fabulous, and must be, so long as it is merely a statement on a printed page. One visit to the Tower or the Forum makes a sudden change. The fabulous becomes distinct. It is like sunlight flashing into a dusky corner. And the best of all is, that the sunlight stays; and facts never go off again into the vague distance where they were before, but remain near and clear forever to your mind.

I want to warn you of one disagreeable thing sure to happen, which is, that the minute you visit any of these celebrated places, a sharp and mortifying sense of ignorance will take possession of you. "Dear me, who *was* Guy, Earl of War-

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wick?" you will ask yourself. "And Lady Jane Grey's father,—I can't recollect his name at all,—and why was it that they cut off her head?" Then the guide will lead the way into a dark cell, and tell you it was Sir Walter Raleigh's bed-chamber during his long imprisonment, and you will conjure up a vague recollection of the great Sir Walter, as a young man flinging his cloak down before the Queen, and will long to know more, except that the party is moving on, and you are ashamed to ask. Or, if it is in Rome that you happen to be sight-seeing, you will trip down the long steps which lead into the great Forum, and look at the beautiful groups of columns and the broken arches, and all at once it will come to you with a shock that you know nothing at all about the Forum; that up to this time it has only been a name in your memory. In a general way, you have gathered that it was the place where the Roman Senators and people met to discuss public matters, but it does n't look in the least as you had expected it would; and besides, you hear of other Forums, many others, in different parts of the city, and instead of enjoying intelligently, you stand bewildered and confused, and listen helplessly while some one reads a few bald pages of Murray's guide-book; and the guide explains what he does n't know, in Italian which you don't understand. You long to go straight home, hunt up the proper books, study the subject well, and then come back and see the Forum again. But, alas! the books are in the home book-case in America, and the Roman Circulating Library seems to have nothing in it but novels; and even if it had, what time could you find to read where there is so much to be seen and done? All that is left is for you to put the matter aside, with a dull, unsatisfied feeling, and resolve to find out about it when you can; but before that time comes, the full, fresh interest will have worn off. And, oh! what a pity it was that you could not have been prepared before you went there!

Every traveler feels this want at times, even the best-educated ones, for no education is so complete as to prepare its owner on all points and against all surprises. What the ill-educated ones lose cannot be calculated! It is like voyaging with one eye blinded and the other half shut. You see, hear, feel only a little piece of things, impressions enter your brain only part way, and what with the puzzle and vexation at your own ignorance and the sting of a missed opportunity, you go about with so much annoyance in your mind that you but half enjoy the delightful chance which perhaps will never be yours to enjoy again.

So, dear girls, take my advice, and while you have libraries and leisure, and people ready to explain things, and a mind free to receive the explanations, get yourselves ready to profit by what may come. You will be very glad afterward. Every subject carefully looked into, every bit of history tucked away into its proper place in your memory, every little interesting fact, every cell made ready for the reception of mental honey, will prove, when the right moment comes, a thing to be thankful for. Each scrap of French, or Italian, or German will find its place; each hard word which seems so dry now, will be useful then; every fragment of scientific knowledge—nothing will be lost or valueless, and the most casual and unlikely thing may turn out to be a friend at need and a friend indeed.

If you go in Rome to see the mosaic works belonging to the Government, you will find that the great pictures which you have admired on the walls of St. Peter's are made up of an immense number of small bits of stone and marble, chosen for their color, and fitted, each into exactly its prepared place. The mosaic workers who make the pictures would never think of beginning till the bits of marble were all ready, polished and sorted out. It would be awkward indeed to stop in the middle of the work, because there was no blue left with which to finish the Madonna's eye, or to leave a hole in the Saint's robe for the lack of half a dozen little red stones.

I want you to imitate their carefulness, and get ready these precious small bits of knowledge before the time comes to work them into the beautiful whole. Then, when the great chance arrives, your material will be ready, and fitting one with another, a valuable thing will grow of them, which will be yours for life. But don't let the pattern be spoiled for lack of a tiny scrap of this or that which you have not had the forethought to prepare in time.

And just one thing more. Let your minds grow as fast as they will, but let your souls grow too. Don't go about regarding the nations of the earth in general as "queer foreigners," who must be undervalued and scorned because their ways are not like our own. To us our own ways seem best, but there is good everywhere, and things are not necessarily ridiculous because they differ from those which we are accustomed to. And then, though you must n't think I want to preach, God has made all men of one family, and, in spite of varieties of complexion, tastes and habits, all have the same needs, the same human nature, the same death to die, the same Everlasting Father, and so all, in a sense, are brothers and sisters to each other. This thought going along with you, charity, patience, and kindliness will go too, blessed fellow-travelers these, and good helpers on the road. Your mind will widen, your sympathies grow big, and all the world become wonderful and delightful,

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as it must always be to people whose hearts are large enough to take it in. After a journey made in this spirit, you will come back, as American girls should come, not merely with Paris bonnets and Genoese filigree, but sweeter and stronger than when you went away; wiser, too, and better fitted to see the meanings of things at home, and take your place as dwellers in a free land. For, beautiful, and instructive, and full of charm as Europe is, to be an American in the true sense of the word is better yet; and I hope you will all continue to feel that, however many times you go abroad.

THE BOY EMIGRANTS.

By Noah Brooks.

Chapter XIII.

LAUGHTER AND TEARS.

"Waugh! how I hate hog-meat!" exclaimed Barnard, looking into his plate of fried bacon, with an expression of extreme disgust.

"And no game since week before last," added Arthur, dolefully.

"When you can't get butter, you must make salt pork do, my old grandmother used to say," was Mont Morse's wise comment on this outbreak of discontent. "We enlisted for the campaign with hog-meat, boys, and you wont back out now, will you?"

"But we did reckon on more game, you know," argued Barney; "and we have had precious little since we got out of the antelope country."

"You disremember the dogs and frogs," said Hi, with a grimace.

Both the Stevens boys laughed. When they were in the prairie-dog region, they had killed and eaten all of those animals they could get at. But Hi had steadfastly refused to "eat dog," as he expressed it, and his brother Tom had thought it necessary to follow his example. It was in vain that Mont had urged that "prairie-dogs" were not dogs at all, but a species of marmot; that they fed on roots and vegetables, and that their meat was as sweet and wholesome as that of rabbits.

"You need n't tell me," was Hi's constant reply. "They set up on end, and bark just like dogs. They live with rattlesnakes and owls, and they 're not fit for a white man to eat. General Fremont may eat dogs, but I wont, until I 'm starving."

His refusal to partake of this strange food, as he considered it, gave the others a larger share. The prairie-dogs, numerous though they were, were never plenty in the camp. They sat up cunningly on their haunches and barked at the hunters, very much in the squeaky fashion of toy-dogs; but, when shot at, they tumbled into their holes and were seldom recovered, even though severely wounded. They posted themselves by the opening of their dens, each one a sentinel to warn of danger. When they fell over, their comrades below dragged them into the burrow, where the young hunters could hear them whining and crying, in a half-human fashion, over their wounds. They were good to eat, but tender-hearted Arthur, much as he desired a change from their diet of "side-meat," never could take pleasure in killing the pretty little creatures.

As for frogs, when the party occasionally reached a pond of melted snow-water, warmed by the summer sun and musical with frogs, Mont rolled up his trousers, and, armed with a thick stick, waded in and slew them, right and left.

"But Boston folks consider them a great luxury," he remonstrated, when Hi and Tom expressed their profound disgust at such proceedings. "Take off the hind-legs, skin them and fry them—what can you want better?"

"Hog-meat," replied Hi, sententiously.

But it must be confessed that Hi looked on with interest while Mont and Barnard daintily nibbled at the delicate bones of the frogs' legs, nicely browned and having all the appearance of fried chicken.

"Stands to reason," muttered Hi, with his mouth watering, "that frogs is vermin, and vermin aint fit to eat."

"Frogs is toads, and toads is insex," sneered Tom. "Dad told me so. Think yer know more 'n dad, do yer?"

They were drawing near Salt Lake City now, and even the small game which Hi and Tom despised was no longer to be had. Occasionally, they shot a hare,—one of the long-eared, long-legged kind known as the jackass-rabbit. Sage-hens, too, had been plentiful in some localities, and, though the flesh of these was dark and bitter

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SEVEN MILES UP IN THE AIR.

By James Richardson.

TOO HIGH FOR COMFORT.

On the fifth day of September, 1862, two English aëronauts, Glaisher and Coxwell by name, made one of the most remarkable ascents recorded in the history of ballooning. They started from Wolverhampton, England, and the elevation reached was the highest ever attained by man—nearly or quite

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seven miles above the earth. Last summer, three scientific Frenchmen rose to nearly as great a height, but only one returned alive; the other two were suffocated in the thin air so far above the clouds.

Messrs. Glaisher and Coxwell were more fortunate, but their escape was a narrow one. Mr. Glaisher had already lost his senses, and Mr. Coxwell the use of his hands, when the upward course of the balloon was stayed by Mr. Coxwell, who succeeded in grasping the valve-rope with his teeth, and by ducking his head was able to open the safety-valve and allow some of the gas to escape.

Mr. Glaisher has given a modest yet thrilling account of this almost fatal adventure. The balloon left the earth at three minutes past one P. M. Nothing important occurred until the party, at forty minutes past one, reached the altitude of four miles from the earth. Discharging sand, they rose to the height of five miles during the next ten minutes. Up to this time Mr. Glaisher had taken observations with comfort, though Mr. Coxwell, having more to do, found some difficulty in breathing. More sand was discharged, and the balloon shot rapidly upward. Soon Mr. Glaisher's sight failed, and he could not read the fine divisions on his instruments. All the time the balloon had been spinning round and round, and the valve-line had become so entangled that Mr. Coxwell had to climb into the ring above the car to adjust it.

At this moment (one o'clock and fifty-four minutes) Mr. Glaisher looked at the barometer and found its reading to be 9¾ inches, implying a height of over 29,000 feet. Wishing to record the observation, he found his right arm powerless. He tried to move the other arm, and found it powerless too.

"Then I tried to shake myself, and succeeded, but I seemed to have no limbs. On looking at the barometer, my head fell over my left shoulder; I struggled and shook my body again, but could not move my arms. Getting my head upright for an instant only, it fell on my right shoulder; then I fell backward, my back resting upon the side of the car and my head on its edge. In this position my eyes were directed to Mr. Coxwell in the ring. When I shook my body I seemed to have full power over the muscles of the back, and considerably so over those of the neck, but none over either my arms or my legs. As in the case of the arms, so all muscular power was lost in an instant from my back and neck. I dimly saw Mr. Coxwell, and endeavored to speak, but could not. In an instant intense darkness overcame me, but I was still conscious, with as active a brain as at the present moment whilst writing this. I thought I had been seized with asphyxia, and believed I should experience nothing more, as death would come unless we descended speedily; other thoughts were entering my mind, when I suddenly became unconscious as on going to sleep."

Meanwhile, Mr. Coxwell was in quite as critical a condition. Hoar-frost was all around the neck of the balloon, and the ring was piercingly cold. He attempted to leave the ring, and found that his hands were frozen. He dropped to the car almost insensible, and discovered that his companion was apparently dead. He tried to go to him, but could not. He wished to open the valve, but his hands were frozen and his arms powerless. Feeling insensibility coming rapidly over him, he made a desperate effort, caught the valve-line with his teeth, and held the valve open until the balloon took a decided downward turn.

In a few minutes Mr. Glaisher began to revive, and soon became conscious that Mr. Coxwell was trying to rouse him.

"I then heard him speak more emphatically, but could not see, speak, or move. I heard him again say: 'Do try; now do.' Then the instruments became dimly visible, then Mr. Coxwell, and very shortly I saw clearly. Next I arose from my seat and looked around as though waking from sleep, though not refreshed, and said to Mr. Coxwell, 'I have been insensible.' He said, 'You have, and I too, very nearly.' I then drew up my legs, which had been extended, and took a pencil in my hand to begin observations. Mr. Coxwell told me that he had lost the use of his hands, which were black, and I poured brandy over them."

What if Mr. Coxwell had lost the use of his neck also!

It has been said that during the critical moments when Mr. Glaisher was unconscious and Mr. Coxwell nearly so, the balloon reached the fearful height of seven miles; and some of the young readers of ST. NICHOLAS may wonder how two half-dead men could tell that.

As you have already been informed, the barometer, when Mr. Glaisher's last observation was made, showed that the balloon was 29,000 feet, or about five miles and a half, above the earth. The observations he had been making from minute to minute showed how fast the balloon was rising when he lost his senses. His first act on recovering was to look at the chronometer and barometer before him. The one showed that he had lost several minutes, the other that the balloon was falling. In a minute or two he was able to tell how fast they were falling. From these data he was able to calculate closely how long the balloon must have continued to rise before Mr. Coxwell was able to arrest its upward course, and from

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